

REMARKS

Claims 1-52 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 3, 5-7, 9-14, 16-18, 20-22, 24, 26-27, 29, 31-32, 34, 36-39, 41-44, 46-59 and 51-52 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), as described in paragraph 2 of the Office Action. Claims 8 and 19 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form including the base claim and any intervening claims, as described in paragraph 3 of the Office Action. Claims 2, 4, 15, 23, 25, 28, 30, 33, 35, 40, 45 and 50 were allowed, as described in paragraph 4 of the Office Action. Claims 1-6 and 12-17 are the only independent claims.

The specification has been amended to correct a minor typographical error and to generally place the application in correct idiomatic English.

It is noted that the Examiner has cited Kawabata (USPN 6,370,262), for example as discussed in paragraph 2 of the Office Action. However, the reference is not listed on the Notice of References cited (Form PTO-892). In order to ensure that the reference is listed on the front page of a patent resulting from the above-identified application, Applicants request that Kawabata be listed on a Notice of References cited (Form PTO-892).

Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 3, 5-7, 9-14, 16-18, 20-22, 24, 26-27, 29, 31-32, 34, 36-39, 41-44, 46-59 and 51-52 are patentable over the prior art of record for the following reasons.

In accordance with one aspect of the present invention, an input image is subjected to noise removal. Further, the image is displayed with information indicating how much image quality has improved or how much noise has been removed with respect to the original image. Accordingly, the viewer can easily know how much of the original image was subjected to noise removal.

Each of independent claims 1-5 comprise, *inter alia*, “**superimposing** the image generated in said generating an image on the image before being subjected to noise removal in said removing noise or on the image from which noise has been removed, **to generate a composite image for display.**”

Independent claim 6 requires, *inter alia*, “**spatially combining** a part of the image before being subjected to noise removal in said removing noise and a part of the image from which noise has been removed so as to display the same on the screen, respectively, **to generate a composite image for display.**”

Each of independent claims 12-16 comprise, *inter alia*, “image composition means for **superimposing** the image generated by the image generation means on the image before being subjected to noise removal by the noise removal means or on the image from which noise has been removed, **to generate a composite image for display.**”

Independent claim 17 comprises, *inter alia*, “image composition means for receiving the input image and the output image from the noise removal means, and **spatially combining** a part of the input image with a part of the output image from the noise removal means so as to display the same on the screen, **to generate a composite image to be output.**”

It is respectfully submitted that neither Takayama nor Kawabata, either singly or in combination, teaches the above-identified limitations.

Specifically, as discussed in paragraph 4 of the Office Action, the prior art of record does not teach or suggest “image composition step of superimposing the image generated in the image generation step on the image before being subjected to noise removal or the noise removal step or in the image from which noise has been removed, to generate a composite image for display.”

In view of paragraph 4 of the Office Action, and in view of the amendments to the claims, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 1-6 and 12-17 are patentable over the prior art of record within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. § 103, and request that the outstanding rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 be withdrawn.

Having fully and completely responded to the Office Action, Applicants submit that all of the claims are now in condition for allowance, an indication of which is respectfully solicited.

If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

Respectfully submitted,

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